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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000069

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND OES  
DEPT PASS TO USFWS BWEISSGOLD  
ADDIS ABABA FOR REO LISA BRODEY

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#) [MA](#)  
SUBJECT: TURTLE SMUGGLERS CAPTURED

¶1. A South African national was recently arrested in Madagascar for attempting to smuggle rare turtles out of the country. This incident follows a recent arrest in the French territory of Mayotte where smugglers were apprehended with 20 endangered turtles from Madagascar. Malagasy customs enforcement and border patrol, regional cooperation, and public outreach programs are slowly improving enforcement of conservation measures. Still, with millions of Malagasy living a subsistence existence, the Government's aspiration to have the people "Cherish their Environment" remains a distant objective.

¶2. The island of Madagascar has 3,000 miles of mostly unguarded coastline. Customs enforcement at the main international air and sea ports is adequate, but regional and international cooperation is needed to close off illegal markets for Madagascar's wildlife. Nine species of land and freshwater turtles are present in Madagascar, five of which are endemic. According to some press reports, illicit traders can sell rare turtles for up to USD 10,000, providing a substantial incentive for smugglers.

MARQUARDT